

DEDICATED TO OUR COMMUNITY, OUR PROFESSION AND EACH OTHER

Summer 2012

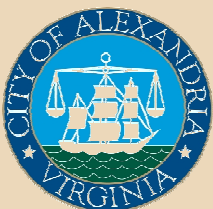


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THE RESPONDER

Celebrating Emergency Medical Services

During the month of May the Emergency Medical Services Section celebrated Emergency Medical Services Week from May 20 through May 26. EMS staff and firefighters conducted a number of outreach events during the week focused on raising the public's awareness about life threatening emergencies and preventive measures that can be taken to avoid them. Medic units visited several sites around the City taking blood pressures, testing blood sugar and doing basic medical assessments during the week.

On May 24th INOVA Alexandria Hospital once again hosted the annual EMS Breakfast in the hospital's atrium. Numerous firefighters and paramedics were recognized for their performance over the past year in dealing with emergency medical incidents. Thirty five members of the Department were awarded medals for their performance in providing excellent emergency medical care under the most difficult of conditions.

At the conclusion of the breakfast a special ceremony was held outside the hospital's Emergency Department. In the garden located in front of the ambulance entrance, hospital staff unveiled a plaque in memory of Paramedic Joshua Weissman who died in the line of duty in February. The plaque reads "Special Remem-

brance of our EMS Friend and Colleague Paramedic Joshua A. Weissman February 23, 1978 – February 9, 2012". The plaque is appropriately placed where all of Josh's colleagues can see it each time they bring someone to the Alexandria Emergency Department. He will be remembered long after



Hospital Staff and guests gather outside the ER for an unveiling of a plaque in memory of Paramedic Joshua Weissman.

2012 passes.

The evening of May 24th was filled with celebration as members of the 27th EMS Recruit School attended a commencement ceremony at the Nannie J. Lee Center. The recruits started with the Department on March 5 and underwent twelve weeks of intense training in emergency medicine and basic firefighting skills. The seven EMS recruits were sworn in and began serving the Alexandria community as early as the next day. The event featured remarks by Fire Chief Adam Thiel, Mayor William D. Euille and Opera-

tional Medical Director Joseph Marfori, MD.

Congratulations go to Medics Nathan Brenner, Hilary Gates, Remi Howell, Wilder Leavitt, Rachel Lese, Micah Nerone and Young Kim. Job well done!

Finally, on Friday evening, May 25, the National Memorial EMS Bike Ride's "Muddy Angels" concluded their annual memorial ride which began two weeks earlier in Boston, Massachusetts. The riders brought recognition to those lost in the line of duty while providing EMS care. A reception for these riders was held at the Alexandria Westin on Saturday, May 26 where they held a special recognition ceremony in memory of Alexandria Paramedic Joshua Weissman.

A week of packed activities raised the level of awareness on EMS providers and the work they do as well as provided invaluable education on life threatening emergencies to the public. 🚒



Fire News

A number of incidents kept the Department busy during the Spring. The following are a few of the incidents that highlighted the three month period since our last issue:

Smoke Alarm Alerts Resident to House Fire

On April 30th firefighters responded to a report of a kitchen fire in a home located in the 200 block of South Payne Street at 12:36 pm. Fire crews arriving at the home found smoke coming from the front and rear of the three story townhouse. Upon entry, firefighters extinguished a fire at the rear of the home at 1:05 pm.

One resident was at home at the time of the fire. The resident, who was on the third floor of the home, was alerted to the fire by a battery operated smoke alarm on the first floor. The resident discovered the fire while investigating the sounding alarm and safely exited the structure and called 911.

Two Alarm Fire in Storage Facility Closes Eisenhower Avenue

On May 29th at 3:56am firefighters responded to 4900 Eisenhower Avenue for a fire in a storage unit. Arriving firefighters reported fire and smoke showing from several storage units of the Atlantic Self Storage complex. Firefighters initiated an interior attack of the fire utilizing several fire hose lines. A second alarm was dispatched to assist in fighting the fire. The fire was extinguished at 5:59 am.

Because of firefighting activities Eisenhower Avenue was closed between the Van Dorn Metro Station and Clermont Avenue. The

roadway was reopened to a single lane of traffic in each direction at about 7:15am

Approximately 80 units in the complex or about 20% of the storage units on the site were involved or damaged due to heat and/or fire.

Preliminary damage estimates were listed at \$140,000.

Gas Line Break Shuts Down Slaters Lane

On June 15 at 9:02 am firefighters responded to 817 Slaters Lane for a report of a broken gas line on fire next to a building. Arriving firefighters found a broken gas line on fire in front of 817 Slaters Lane. The building was under construction. Firefighters quickly extinguished the fire. Gas Company representatives worked for the next hour to close off the break. The gas line was closed at approximately 10:04 am.

Slaters Lane between Route 1 and the George Washington Parkway was closed to all traffic during the incident. Adjacent buildings from 821 to 827 Slaters Lane were evacuated as a precaution.

Slaters Lane was reopened to traffic around 10:15 am. There were no reported injuries.

Gas Leak Forces Evacuation of Businesses

On June 18 at 11:42 am. the Department responded to 108 South Washington Street for a report of an odor of natural gas inside the building. Construction workers were working in the basement of the building when they noticed an odor of what they described as natural gas. Arriving firefighters detected an odor of something in ad-

dition to high levels of carbon monoxide in the basement. Six businesses in the 600 block of King Street and the 100 block of South Washington Street were found to have elevated levels of carbon monoxide. All six buildings were evacuated. The 600 block of King Street was closed to traffic in both directions. Northbound lanes of South Washington Street were reduced to one lane in the 100 block of South Washington Street while firefighters ventilated the buildings and the gas company attempted to locate the source of the odor and the carbon monoxide.

Carbon Monoxide levels returned to normal by 2:00 pm and the building occupants were permitted to reoccupy the buildings shortly afterward. Fire Department equipment began clearing the scene at 2:15 pm. The area streets were reopened afterward. The Gas Company remained on the scene to investigate further. There were no reported injuries during the incident.



PUBLIC SAFETY VALOR AWARDS

On April 26th members of Alexandria's public safety agencies and the public gathered at the Crown Plaza Old Town Alexandria for the 2012 Valor Awards luncheon. The event honored Fire, Police and Sheriff employees for acts of valor during 2011. This year 30 medals and certificates were awarded to members of the three agencies; fourteen went to members of the Fire Department.

See Valor, Next Page.

Community Engagement

Springtime brought about fire company visits to the City's youngest students. During April, fire companies visited 53 Preschool and Kindergarten sites spending time with more than 3550 students. The focus of these visits was on fire safety basics which included home escape; things that can burn; smoke alarm awareness; dialing 9-1-1; and firefighters are friendly.

Staff from these schools provided very positive responses to the visits. The Department's new firefighters were very engaged and enthusiastic. All fire staff did a great job in April.

April also marked the conclusion of the smoke and carbon monoxide grant partnership with the Institute for Fire Engineers. The grant concluded on April 30. The Department installed 1018 alarms include 10 alarms for the hearing impaired. In addition, the Department reached out to over 3000 homes providing valuable outreach and educational materials on home escape planning, carbon monoxide awareness and in-home fire prevention planning.

The grant was very successful and the Department thanks Doug Townshend, the grant funded employee, for all his assistance and dedication to the project. 🚒

Valor, From Page 2.

Awards given to members of the Fire Department were focused on the September 8th floods. On that date the City as well as the Washington Metropolitan Area experienced record rainfall and flooding. Fire Departments all over the area

were overwhelmed with 911 calls. Mutual aid was limited, if not non-existent. Many emergency crews dealt with situations with the resources they had on hand as addition help was unavailable. To add to these challenges, the flooding was rapid; creating swift water conditions for which none of Alexandria's firefighters or medics had training for. This resulted in a number of rescues, 30 in all, made at great risk to members of the Department. Members entered the swift water many times, avoiding floating cars, dumpsters, unseen hazards below the surface, and strong currents in order to rescue people trapped in buildings and vehicles. Several times firefighters were pulled under the water by the currents and fortunately they were able to be rescued by fellow firefighters before they, themselves, became victims.

Firefighters Michael Chandler, Patrick Lyon, Louis Simpson, and Joseph Porcelli responded to a mutual aid call at Winterview Drive in Fairfax County. In that incident the crew was tasked with rescuing an elderly driver trapped in his vehicle as waters rose up to the car's windows, threatening to move the car down stream. Firefighters Chandler and Lyon traveled up the ladder of Truck 208 while Firefighters Simpson and Porcelli worked to keep the aerial ladder in position over the vehicle. After several attempts they were able to remove the driver just as the car was washed away under them. Firefighter Chandler received the Gold Medal, Firefighter Lyon the Silver Medal, Firefighter Simpson the Bronze Medal and Firefighter Porcelli the Lifesaving Award.

Captain Robert Robinson, Firefighters Michael Schaffer and Robert Townsend responded to the 2700 block of Eisenhower Avenue for reports of flooding and motorists trapped. The crew rescued a number of motorists from cars trapped in rising waters before becoming trapped themselves on top of their fire engine. They were able to self rescue using a rescue line and then proceeded to a number of flooded buildings looking for other trapped persons. Captain Robinson, Firefighters Schaffer and Townsend were awarded the Bronze Medal for their efforts.

Captains Phillip Perry and Anthony Casalena along with Firefighters William Dunleavy and Christopher Smith also responded to the 2700 block of Eisenhower Avenue for the flood incident. These members were involved in the rescue of countless individuals trapped in cars that were being washed away by the strong currents. The four members entered the waters many times and on several occasions one or more of them were pulled under water by the current. Despite these dangerous conditions, they remained focused and rescued each person they found during the incident.

Captain Phillip Perry was awarded the Gold Medal, Firefighter William Dunleavy was awarded the Silver Medal, Captain Anthony Casalena and Firefighter Christopher Smith were awarded Life Saving Awards for their efforts.

Lieutenant Charles Davis and Firefighters Warner Sherman and John Silverwood responded to the 2700

See Valor, Page 4, Column 1.

Summer 2012 Run Statistics (April through June)

	Unit	EMS	SUP	TOTAL	Current Yr	Previous Yr
Station 201	E201	128	182	310	543	1376
Station 202	M202	469	126	595	893	2113
	U202	1	8	9	19	55
Total		470	134	604	912	2168
Station 203	E203	174	180	354	489	1178
	T203	6	58	64	489	1028
Total		180	238	418	978	2206
Station 204	E204	178	205	383	558	1529
	T204	40	306	346	591	1428
Total		218	511	729	1149	2957
Station 205	E205	214	279	493	792	2087
	M205	548	140	688	1128	2769
Total		762	419	1181	1920	4856
Station 206	E206	313	291	604	963	1921
	M206	610	156	766	1108	2734
	R206	75	137	212	435	616
Total		998	584	1582	2506	5271
Station 207	E207	267	249	516	771	2004
	M207	534	108	642	1028	2396
Total		801	357	1158	1799	4400
Station 208	E208	364	344	708	1120	2752
	M208	585	127	712	1144	2817
	T208	83	331	414	657	1634
Total		1032	802	1834	2921	7203
Station 209	E209	162	206	368	532	1365
	H209	2	19	21	22	63
	S209	2	27	29	158	526
Total		166	252	418	712	1954
Peak Time Medics	M213	0	2	2	44	443
	M214	163	39	202	434	576
Total		163	41	204	478	1019
Station totals		4918	3520	8438	13918	33410

Valor, From Page 3.

block of Eisenhower as well. They brought along an inflatable Zodiac known as Boat 204. Boat 204 had been decommissioned due to a number of issues but in light of the lack of mutual aid resources, Lieutenant Davis and his crew brought the Zodiac to the scene. It was im-

mediately deployed and used to rescue one person trapped on a small spot of dry land. The crew then proceeded over to Strayer University where they removed a large number of students and faculty trapped in the flooded school building. The entire time the boat filled with water from a number of leaks and required con-

stant baling to keep it seaworthy.

For their efforts Lieutenant Davis, Firefighters Sherman and Silverwood were awarded Life Saving Awards.

Congratulations go out to all the 2012 Valor Award recipients. 🚒